



JAMES E. MCGREEVEY  
Governor

## New Jersey Office of the Attorney General

Division of Consumer Affairs  
State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners  
124 Halsey Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Newark, NJ 07102



PETER C. HARVEY  
Attorney General

October 22, 2004

RENI ERDOS  
Director

By Certified and Regular Mail

Christine A. Newman, D.V.M., Director  
Harlingen Veterinary Clinic  
10 Sunset Road  
Belle Mead, New Jersey 08502

RECEIVED and FILED by the  
NEW JERSEY STATE BOARD OF  
VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINERS  
on this date of: 2-22-05  
Mailing Address:  
Newark, NJ 07101  
(973) 504-6500

Re: I/M/O CHRISTINE A. NEWMAN, D.V.M.  
Complaint Number: 04-009

Letter of Admonishment In Lieu of Disciplinary Proceeding

Dear Dr. Newman:

This letter is to advise you that the New Jersey State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (hereinafter referred to as the "Board") has had an opportunity to review a complaint it received, filed by Carl E. Gold, concerning the treatment which you, and your hospital Harlingen Veterinary Clinic, rendered to "Chakalaka," his then five year Labrador Retriever, on or about December 11, 2003.

Specifically, the information reviewed by the Board included, but is not limited to, the following documents:

1. A complaint filed, on or about February 10, 2004, by Carl E. Gold, as well as any and all attachments and exhibits;
2. Correspondences, dated March 8, 2004, and April 7, 2004, respectively, from Christine A. Newman, D.V.M., to the Board, as well as any and all attachments and exhibits; and
3. Testimony provided by Dr. Newman at an Investigative Inquiry held before the Board on April 28, 2004, as well as any and all exhibits marked for identification during the inquiry.

Upon review of all available information, the Board has determined that there is insufficient cause in this matter to warrant the initiation of formal disciplinary proceedings. Notwithstanding this decision, the Board, however, asked me to convey to you its concerns with regard to this matter.

In reviewing this complaint, the Board found that, the complainant Carl E. Gold presented Chakalaka ("Chaka") to your clinic, Harlingen Veterinary Clinic ("Clinic"), on December 11, 2004, for a spay. Kristen Ripberger, D.V.M., performed the operation on that same day. Prior to the dog's surgery, the owner had been advised, orally, that the costs of said procedure would be approximately \$300.00. Having been provided this estimate, Mr. Gold authorized the spay surgery for Chaka. Following the procedure, however, the owner was presented with a bill that was \$200.00 more than the initial estimate for the spay. However, Mr. Gold paid the bill and took Chaka home.

Unfortunately, complications resulted from the spay surgery. Chaka began bleeding approximately thirty-six (36) hours later and required additional emergency surgery. The costs for the second surgery was approximately \$800.00. Mr. Gold refused to pay the balance of his bill maintaining that the emergency surgery was a direct result of the original surgery performed at and by your clinic. Shortly, thereafter, Mr. Gold filed his complaint with the Board.

In its review of this matter, the Board reviewed your patient records. Contained within the records were unrelated editorial comments authored by you, including a directive of "do not copy records for anyone," that were totally unrelated to the medical condition and/or treatment of the dog.

The Board found that the veterinary medical services your clinic provided to Chaka in this matter were appropriate and hence warranted no disciplinary action. However, the Board requested that I express its concerns as to the unrelated editorial comments contained in your medical records. The Board found these comments to be sarcastic and unprofessional. It has concluded that these types of comments have no place in a permanent medical record. The Board strongly admonishes you to review N.J.A.C. 13:44-4.9(a) in order to ascertain the appropriate and required information to be included in a patient record.

Additionally, the Board noted that your records included a mandate that the records were not to be released to anyone and in your testimony before the Board on April 28, 2004, you indicated

that you intended to refuse to release Chaka's records until the owner had paid his outstanding bill. Again, the Board strongly urges you to review N.J.A.C. 13:44-4.9(c), its regulation governing the release of patient records, and to comply with its mandates.

As you may be aware, the Board is obligated to review every complaint received from consumers in order to assure that veterinarians licensed to practice in this State are complying with the applicable statutes, regulations and accepted standards of practice. Notwithstanding the concerns expressed in this letter, the Board has determined not to initiate any formal disciplinary action against you at this time. The Board suggests that you consider the issues raised in this correspondence and comply with the directives contained herein. This matter will now be considered closed by the Board and, as such, this letter will be a matter of public record.

NEW JERSEY STATE BOARD OF  
VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINERS

By: Leslie G. Aronson

LESLIE G. ARONSON  
Executive Director

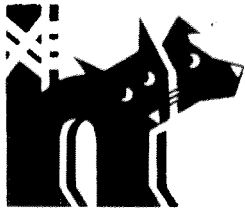
DATED: 2/14/05

ACKNOWLEDGMENT: I, CHRISTINE A. NEWMAN, D.V.M., hereby acknowledge receipt of this letter and assure that I will comply with the directives contained herein. *with reservations, as outlined in the accompanying letter.*

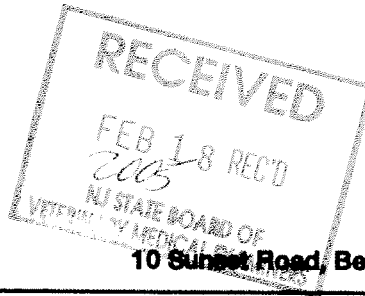
Christine A. Newman

CHRISTINE A. NEWMAN, D.V.M.

cc: Deputy Attorney General Olga E. Bradford  
RR# 7002 0860 0000 9897 4826



**Harlingen  
Veterinary Clinic**



**Christine Newman, D.V.M.  
Kristen Ripberger, D.V.M.**

**10 Sunset Road, Belle Mead, New Jersey 08502 908 • 359-2000**

Leslie G. Aronson  
State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners  
P.O.Box 45020  
Newark, NJ 07101

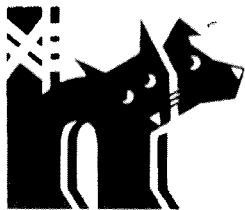
February 15, 2005

Dear Ms. Aronson,

I am in receipt of your letter dated October 22, 2004 regarding complaint number 04-009 and the second letter I received today dated October 14, 2004. I did not reply previously because it was not clear to me from the initial letter that a reply was required. While I appreciate the Board's finding that the facts do not support the initiation of formal disciplinary proceedings and am in complete agreement with this finding, there are aspects of the letter that trouble me greatly.

The fourth paragraph of your letter states "However, Mr. Gold paid the bill and took Chaka home." This is patently untrue. I stated in my letter of April 27, 2004, Mr. Gold picked up Chaka but we did not receive the payment until the following week. My conversation regarding payment with Mr. Gold is clearly recorded in the medical record. In addition, our computer record states clearly that the invoice was not paid on the day it was presented. Mr. Gold lied about this in his complaint and now the lie has been reproduced as fact in your letter.

I have studied N.J.A.C., 13:44-4.9 and fail to see how the medical record I submitted does not meet the requirements it sets forth. This section makes no mention of editorial comments. I have enclosed a copy of this section for your reference. In addition, I absolutely was not the author of the directive "do not copy records for anyone,". My receptionist placed the note on the record after I verbally made the above statement in a moment of frustration. I never instructed her to write the above in the record and all of my staff has subsequently been told to never write such comments in the record.



**Harlingen  
Veterinary Clinic**

**Christine Newman, D.V.M.  
Kristen Ripberger, D.V.M.**

**10 Sunset Road, Belle Mead, New Jersey 08502 908 • 359-2000**

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Paragraph 8 states, incorrectly, that in my "...testimony before the Board on April 28, 3004.( Your letter states 3004), I "...indicated that you intended to refuse to release Chaka's records until the owner had paid his outstanding bill..." I do not remember making this statement, I am sure I did not, and I would appreciate a copy of the transcript where this statement was supposedly made. I have never refused any client a copy of their pet's record and this was not part of Mr. Gold's complaint. I am in total compliance with this section of the standard although we do not require a written request and we do not charge for the copies

I request that this letter also be made a part of the public record in order to counterbalance the above mentioned inaccuracies.

I trust the Board will consider my concerns. The truth and my reputation are very important to me and I believe my concerns should be addressed.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Christine A. Newman, D.V.M.